

Alternative Organizational Structures

Updated 12/8/10

Public Law 2007, Chapter 668 was enacted by passage of LD 2323, *An Act to Remove Barriers to the Reorganization of School Administrative Units*, on April 18, 2008 and signed by the Governor that same day. The law allows reorganization planning committees to file a notice of intent to form an alternative organizational structure instead of a regional school unit, and establishes criteria for the formation of an alternative organizational structure. This was amended by the enactment of Public Law 2009, Chapter 580 (LD 570, *An Act to Improve the Laws Governing Consolidation of School Administrative Units*, on April 1, 2010).

The plan for an AOS must also include an interlocal agreement in accordance with Title 30-A MRSA, Chapter 115, and a plan for presenting, approving, and validating the annual school budget that ensures K-12 budget transparency for its members and their voters. The law requires a plan to achieve that goal; it does not specify the details of how it must be achieved.

An AOS is more formal and more structured than a simple affiliation of independent school administrative units. The language in the law regarding alternative organizational structures does not describe a particular kind of structure. Rather it delineates the core functions that are the responsibility of the AOS as a whole. While the final structure that is approved may have some characteristics of a school union, it will function as a single unit, with expanded local control within the unit.

An AOS plan must ensure the 1) consolidation of system administration; 2) consolidation of special education administration, transportation administration, and the administration of business functions; 3) adoption of core curriculum and procedures for standardized testing; 4) adoption of a plan for both consistent school policies and school calendars; and 5) adoption of a plan for consistent collective bargaining agreements. (Separate collective bargaining agreements are allowed.) [*Clarification of core functions of an alternative organizational structure per P.L. 2009, ch. 580*]

The language on alternative organizational structures provides the *opportunity* to present and have a reorganization plan for an AOS approved, following review of each individual plan. Alternative organizational structures still require submission of a *reorganization plan*, meaning they must meet not only the requirements of an alternative organizational structure, but also those of a reorganization plan (P.L. 2007, Chapter 240, Part XXXX, Sec. 36(2)(C)).

Exactly how applicants will build an alternative organizational plan is not specified in the new law so creativity will be the order of the day and that

creativity must be focused on student opportunity and achievement and the means to efficiently deliver services in a sustainable way.

Beginning in FY 2011-12, the member entities of an alternative organizational structure are recognized as discrete (separate) school administrative units for purposes of state subsidy distribution, unless the member entities of the AOS include in the reorganization plan their decision to be recognized by the department as a single school administrative unit for subsidy purposes. *[Per P.L. 2009, Ch. 580]* For all other purposes, the AOS is treated as a single school administrative unit.

[View a summary of the reorganization law, including changes resulting from LD 2323 and LD 570.](#)